

Congress Debates the Fate of the Nation: Analyzing The Wilmot Proviso & President Polk's 1848 Map

Worksheet 2: Answer Key (Individual answers might vary)

1. What did the Wilmot Proviso say about slavery in the newly acquired Western territories?

There could be no slavery or involuntary servitude in any territory gained by treaty from Mexico.

2. List three ways in which the Wilmot Proviso would have spurred unity and three ways it would have spurred division in America.

Ways of Spurring Union	Ways of Spurring Division
<i>Ended dispute over the Western territory acquired from Mexico</i>	<i>Driven a "wedge" between Northern and Southern members of the Whig and Democratic Parties</i>
<i>Removed the issue of the extension of slavery from politics</i>	<i>Elevated slavery to a national political issue</i>
<i>Preserved the parties as national institutions</i>	<i>Strengthened the Free Soil party in the North</i>

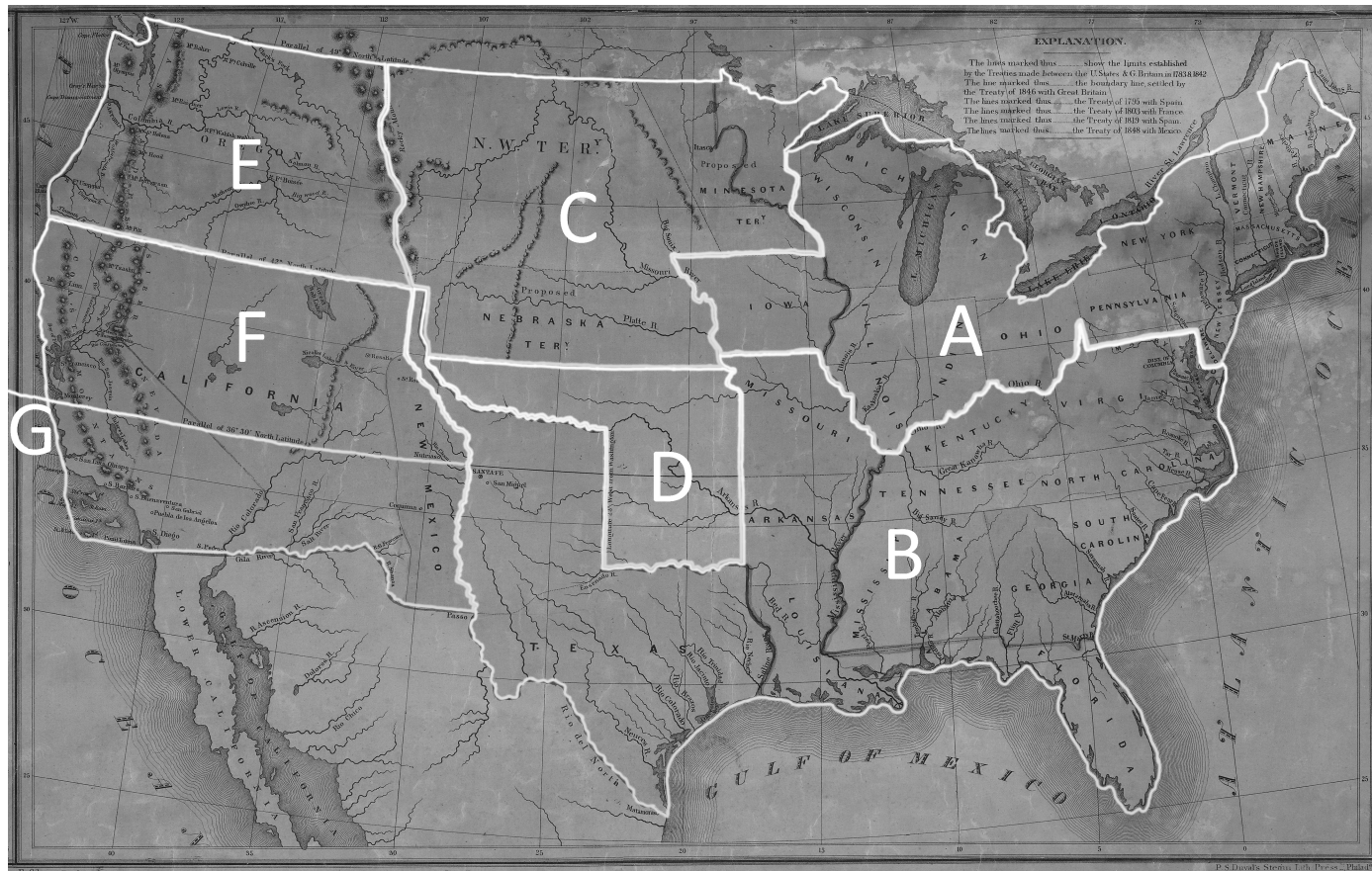
3. Write a hypothesis about whether the Wilmot Proviso would have primarily united or divided the nation and why.

By elevating slavery to a national issue, and drawing a line between Northern and Southern members of both political parties, the Wilmot Proviso primarily divided the nation.

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Worksheet 3: Answer Key

Directions: Outline and label the following areas on this map: *a.* the Free States in 1848, *b.* the Slave States in 1848, *c.* the Northwest Territory, *d.* Indian Territory, *e.* the 36°30' line of latitude, *f.* the Oregon Territory, *g.* the area of the country affected by the Wilmot Proviso. Draw information required from the Polk Map facsimile.



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Worksheet 5: Answer Key (Individual answers might vary)

1. List five significant differences between President Polk's 1848 map and a map of the United States today.

1. <i>California is much bigger – including several other states</i>
2. <i>Texas is much bigger</i>
3. <i>New Mexico is smaller</i>
4. <i>The Mexican border is further north</i>
5. <i>Oregon includes the states of Washington and Idaho</i>

2. List four examples of significant types of information missing from the Polk map. e.g., information about population)

1. <i>Information about the economy</i>
2. <i>Information about transportation (railroads and canals)</i>
3. <i>Information about agricultural production</i>
4. <i>Information about climate and weather</i>

3. Write a one-sentence statement summarizing the argument President Polk's map made about dividing the West.
Making a compromise about slavery by extending the Missouri Compromise line (36°30') to the Pacific will divide the newly acquired territory in a way that could be acceptable to both the North and South.
4. Direct each group of students to write a hypothesis on Worksheet 3 about whether the solution offered by the Polk Map would have primarily united or divided the nation and why.

Answers will vary: The Polk solution might have united North and South in a compromise, except that the Wilmot Proviso had divided them. Accepting Polk's compromise would have required representatives of both regions to back off points made in response to Wilmot – the North to accept slavery in the Western territory, and the South to accept limits on slavery in the Western territory.

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Worksheet 6: Answer Key

Directions: Use information from the tables on President Polk's map to create and color three contrasting bar graphs. Use a different color for each area and label each entry. (Note: The area labeled Indian Territory is not included in this analysis.)

Sq Mi	Area of Existing Free and Slave States (including Texas)		Area of State and Territories Divided as Proposed by the Wilmot Proviso		Area of States and Territories as Proposed by President Polk's Map (California divided at 36°30')	
2,200,000						
2,100,000						
2,000,000			994,435		994,435	
1,900,000			N.W.		N.W.	
1,800,000			Territory		Territory	
1,700,000						
1,600,000						
1,500,000						
1,400,000						
1,300,000						
1,200,000						
1,100,000						
1,000,000			526,078			
900,000		325,530	California			204,383
800,000		Texas		325,530	321,695	S. California
700,000				Texas	N. California	325,530
600,000		610,798	341,463			Texas
500,000		Slave States	Oregon	610,798	341,463	Oregon
400,000	454,340			Slave States	Oregon	610,798
300,000	Free States		454,340		Slave States	Slave States
200,000			Free States		454,340	Free States
100,000					Free States	
	Free	Slave	Free	Slave	Free	Slave